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ABSTRACT

At the end of their initial year in the Teacher Training Program of the Los Angeles Unified School District, teacher trainees attend a series of presentations entitled Multicultural Week. This paper analyzes the content of the presentations and the teachers' views of stereotypes and of teaching culturally diverse children both before and after the multicultural presentations. The presentations appear to have little effect on how teachers think about these issues. Questions are raised about the content and pedagogy of multicultural programs. (27 references) (Author/JD)

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Research Report 90-11

# What To Do About Differences? A Study of Multicultural Education for Teacher Trainees in the Los Angeles Unified School District

G. Williamson McDiarmid

National
Center for Research
on Teacher Education

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Research Report 90-11

# WHAT TO DO ABOUT DIFFERENCES? A STUDY OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR TEACHER TRAINEES IN THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

G. Williamson McDiarmid

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**Abstract**

At the end of their initial year in the Teacher Training Program of the Los Angeles Unified School District, teacher trainees attend a series of presentations entitled Multicultural Week. In his paper, the author analyzes the content of the presentations and the teachers' views of stereotypes and teaching culturally diverse children both before and after the multicultural presentations. He concludes that the presentations appear to have little effect on how teachers think about these issues and raises questions about the content and pedagogy of multicultural programs.

# WHAT TO DO ABOUT DIFFERENCES? A STUDY OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR TEACHER TRAINEES IN THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT[1]

G. Williamson McDiarmid[2]

Like other large urban school districts, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) faces the problem of recruiting teachers--particularly mathematics, science, and bilingual teachers--to teach in schools that serve mostly poor children and those of color. To address this problem, LAUSD initiated the Teacher Trainee Program (TTP). The TTP recruits people who already have baccalaureate degrees with 20 credits in a major and who have passed the National Teachers Examination in the subject area they intend to teach as well as the California Basic Educational Skills Test. After two years of teaching and attending district-organized classes, trainees are recommended by the school board to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing for a regular secondary teaching certificate (Stoddart, 1988).

The initial phase of the program consists of two weeks of classes prior to the beginning of the school year. Classes cover district personnel, grading, security, curriculum policy and child abuse procedures; roll-book maintenance, the physical classroom environment, lesson planning, and subject-specific curriculum planning (see Kennedy, 1990); teacher expectations, student motivation, classroom management, nonverbal communication, and school culture; cooperative learning, learning modalities, and critical thinking (for more details, see Stoddart and Floden, 1990). After they begin teaching, teacher trainees[3] attend weekly seminars after school. In the classroom, they are supervised by a mentor teacher. They are also assigned to one of three continuing education centers run by LAUSD. Experienced LAUSD teachers teach the various courses offered through these centers.

Immediately after their first year of teaching, teacher trainees attend a Multicultural Week. During this week, administrators and specialists from the district office, teachers in district secondary schools, consultants, and university faculty make presentations to the

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[1]Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 1990.

[2]G. Williamson McDiarmid, associate professor of teacher education, is associate director of the National Center for Research on Teacher Education. The author gratefully acknowledges the contributions of Lynn Paine, whose ideas and suggestions shaped both the analysis and the text. Center Director Mary Kennedy also provided useful comments on an earlier draft. Center senior researcher Trish Stoddart and research assistants Michelle Parker and Sandy Callis collected most of the data on which this paper is based. Finally, the author thanks the staff and trainees involved in the Teacher Trainee Program of the Los Angeles Unified School District who gave generously of their time and energy, often when these were in short supply.

[3]For the purposes of this paper, we use "teacher trainees" to refer to participants in the Teacher Training Program because this is the term used by LAUSD. Because of its implications for teaching practice and how one learns to teach, we have reservations about designating people in teacher education programs "trainees."

trainees on a variety of topics. Trainees are expected to summarize each of the 15 sessions they attend and to write a paper to synthesize what they learn.

Multicultural Week is intended to support teachers in meeting their responsibilities as spelled out for them by LAUSD--particularly, their responsibility to "help each student develop a positive self-image" (LAUSD, 1984). To this end, teachers are expected to provide opportunities for students to, among other things: "Gain positive feelings. . . . Take pride in their ethnic background, culture, and heritage. . . . Increase self-confidence. . . . " (LAUSD, 1984, p. 7). To achieve these goals, teacher are encouraged to provide students with

> opportunities to interact with classmates of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. . . . Help to recognize and accept individual differences in their fellow students. . . . An environment reflecting the acceptance and value of work, both creative and academic, of all students. . . . Varied grouping patterns in class to enhance interaction and increase understanding of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. . . . (LAUSD, 1984, p. 7)

The goals, content, and pedagogy of LAUSD's Multicultural Week resemble those of workshops and courses offered by at least some school districts and universities (Carter-Cooper, 1990; McDiarmid, 1989; McDiarmid and Price, 1990). LAUSD, as we shall see, has faced squarely the issue of preparing teachers for culturally diverse classrooms and created a program that seems to embody current best thinking and practice. As presenters for its Multicultural Week, LAUSD has involved educators with notable experience, talent, and expertise, at least on a par with virtually any university teacher education faculty.

How to prepare teachers to work with learners who are culturally different from themselves and from one another is a thorny, dilemma-riddled question for those charged with that preparation, whether in universities or school districts. Conceptually, little agreement exists on which differences matter, how they matter, and how teachers should address or accommodate these in the classroom. Yet, even if teacher educators[4] could resolve these conceptual puzzles and debates, the issue remains of how to help teachers develop an understanding of differences that will enable them to help all learners construct meaningful understandings of themselves and the subject matter.

In what follows, we will examine closely and critically the content and pedagogy of LAUSD's Multicultural Week. How does LAUSD instantiate its goals in the content and delivery of Multicultural Week, its primary medium for supporting teacher trainees' work with diverse learners? As all urban school districts and, increasingly, suburban and rural

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[4]Throughout this paper, the term "teacher educator" refers to anyone involved in the preparation of teachers--in school districts, state departments of education, and universities.

districts face the challenge of serving learners culturally and linguistically different from one another and from their teachers, the answer to this question is of wide interest. LAUSD's reputation for pioneering work in multicultural and bilingual education heightens interest in their program.

Of equal or greater interest is a closely related question: What do teachers take away from courses and workshops about teaching children different--socially, culturally, linguistically--from themselves? What attitudes and knowledge do they develop? Below, we explore both what teacher trainees had the opportunity to learn and their views of teaching culturally different children. In so doing, we raise questions about the content and pedagogy of efforts to change the ways that teachers teach learners culturally different from themselves.[5]

## Methods

### Description of the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study

The data on which this paper is based are taken from a four-year longitudinal investigation of formal teacher education: the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach (TELT) study of the National Center for Research on Teacher Education (for a detailed description, see NCRTE, 1988). Guiding this investigation was an overarching question: What do prospective and practicing teachers learn about teaching subject matter to diverse learners? As knowledge about learners is critical to teaching, TELT researchers have attempted to find out what teachers know and think about learners, particularly learners culturally different from themselves, and how teachers' knowledge and thinking change after formal teacher education programs.

As sites in which to investigate changes in teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions, we selected 11 teacher education programs: 5 preservice programs, 2 alternate routes, 1 induction program, and 2 inservice programs. At these sites, NCRTE researchers have been collecting data both on the program itself and on the program participants. To find out what participants had the opportunity to learn, researchers interviewed program personnel and observed courses, workshops, and instances of guided practice. To find out what participants knew, cared about, and could do, researchers at each site administered a 306-item questionnaire, conducted structured interviews, and observed participants teaching.

The interview consists of questions about the interviewees' experience as students in school and about their understandings of learning, learners, teaching, and subject matter. In the interviews, researchers read scenarios that depict common classroom tasks--such as

[5]"Cultural differences" includes, for the purposes of this paper, differences in language and in social class as these also signal differences in experience, values, and behaviors.

dealing with disengaged students, responding to students' novel ideas in mathematics and writing, addressing differences, and so on. Then, we asked a series of follow-up questions. For instance, after some scenarios, researchers asked teachers their interpretation of the situation and, if faced with similar circumstances, what they would do. The purpose was to have them reason through a typical classroom situation and, in so doing, reveal their knowledge and understandings of the various elements that constitute the situation--the learners, the learning process, the subject matter, the context, the teacher's role. (The instruments are available in Ball and McDiarmid, 1989; the conceptual framework for the instrument is described in McDiarmid and Ball, 1989.)

**LAUSD Sample, Data, and Analysis**

We have been following a cohort of some 110 trainees since 1987, from the beginning of the program through their second year of teaching. We have administered the questionnaire to the entire cohort at the beginning of the program, at the end of their first year of teaching, and during their second year. In addition, we have interviewed and observed a randomly selected sample of 12 teacher trainees.

For this analysis, we have used data both from our observations of the program and data about views of culturally different students collected with the structured interview. We audiotaped each of the sessions during the Multicultural Week. These tapes were transcribed. We then read these transcriptions, wrote summaries of the sessions, and created a table to summarize further the information from the transcriptions. As we are interested in the pedagogy as well as the content of the sessions, we categorized the teaching format (lecture, question and answer, discussion, small group activity, film, game). We also used the "spellcheck" function included in the microcomputer wordprocessing program to count the words spoken by the presenter and those spoken by the participants in each session. The summaries and percent ages of participant talk appear in Table 1 (p. 10 ff.).

When adjusted for measurement errors and regarded with due caution, these counts provide a rough approximation of the degree of the trainee's oral participation in each session.[6] As several presenters during the week enjoined teachers to engage students in learning rather than merely talk at them, we were interested to what degree this admonition was honored in presenters' practice. Finally, to establish the purpose and goals of Multicultural Week, we also examined LAUSD documents and interviews conducted with those in charge of the TTP.

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[6]We emphasize that this is a *rough* approximation. For sessions in which small group activities were involved and during which this group activity was not captured on audiotape, we added 750 words to the participants' count. We calculated (generously) that a one-hour session generated about 9,000 words. Using this as a standard, we then calculated that each five-minute group activity would generate approximately 750 words. Because we used remote microphones that were attached to the presenters' clothing, we also added (again generously) 2 percent to the participants' proportion for each session to compensate for any speech that wasn't picked up by the remote microphone.

In the present analysis, we examined data on trainees' views of different learners as elicited by two scenario items that typify the interview as a whole. We coded trainees' responses for their views of how differences should be treated in the classroom and checked on reliability by having each transcript reviewed by at least two coders. Data used in this analysis was collected at two points in time separated by approximately nine months. The data we call "preworkshop" was collected in June 1988, immediately prior to the beginning of Multicultural Week. The second data set, referred to as "postworkshop," was collected in March 1989.

**Comparison Samples**

Using the same scenarios at all our sites enables us to compare teachers' and prospective teachers' views across types of programs. The preservice sample that we have used as a comparison group in Tables 2 and 3 (p. 12 ff. and p. 14 ff.) consists of students in the final term of their undergraduate program. Most were student teaching at the time they were interviewed. The directors of all the programs these preservice teachers attended claimed that their students either took a multicultural course or took a course in which multiculturalism was a unit. Because of the timing of NCRTE researchers' visits, we were able to observe these courses or units at only two of the five preservice sites.

The second comparison group, data from which is also included in Tables 2 and 3, consists of student teachers participating in an experimental teacher preparation program--the Accepting Behaviors of Culturally Diverse Students Project (ABCD). The Project was developed by the Office of Professional Development at the Michigan Department of Education. ABCD participants were drawn from five different universities in the central Michigan and Detroit areas. The treatment consisted of a three-day workshop prior to student teaching and a two-day follow-up (for a detailed description, see Carter-Cooper, 1990). We collected baseline data on students' views and knowledge prior to the first workshop and interviewed them again during the summer following their student teaching (McDiarmid and Price, 1990). While the researchers relied on documents and the program director's description of the workshop sessions for the evaluation, they subsequently observed the follow-up two-day workshop.

**Problems**

Tapping teachers' and prospective teachers' views of culturally different learners is fraught with problems. Asking teachers directly about their views triggers social responses: Teachers know how they are supposed to answer such questions. Not only do people know how they are supposed to answer, most do not like to think of themselves as people whose attitudes or behavior towards others would be influenced by their appearance, language, or customs. To reduce the likelihood of such bias, we pose the interview items on which we

have relied for this analysis in a plausible classroom context and present "positive" or "neutral" stereotype (e.g., Native Americans are "shy"). Nonetheless, teachers' responses are likely filtered through their ideas about what is socially appropriate.

Responding to scenarios is, moreover, obviously not the same as actually teaching. What people say they will do and what they actually do are frequently two different things. Our interest in this study has been, however, how teachers reason through typical classroom situations; that is, what understandings do they have--of learners, learning, pedagogy, teacher role, the role of context--and how do they blend these understandings in figuring out what they should do? We do not claim that teachers will do what they say would do in their interviews; rather, we claim that what they notice in the scenarios and how they reason through the various teaching tasks tells us about what they are capable of doing.

We also recognize that the dimensions of teachers' knowledge and dispositions that our instruments are intended to tap may not comport well with the specific goals of the program. Program personnel may well disagree with the assumptions that underlie the questions we ask to gauge teachers' views of stereotypes and culturally different learners. We do not systematically assess how well Multicultural Week achieved the goals its planners set. In fact, we scrutinize aspects of the program to which its organizers may not have given much thought. Because of our interest in the opportunities that prospective and practicing teachers have to learn about teaching from the practice of teacher educators, we critically examine the teaching that is modeled by the presenters during the week. Multicultural Week presentations as opportunities for trainees to see pedagogy modeled was not a explicit, formal purpose of those who planned the program.

Finally, unraveling the effects of Multicultural Week from the tangled skein of classroom, personal, and other program experiences is impossible. In the 10 months between Multicultural Week and the "post-" interviews, the trainees taught culturally diverse students in culturally diverse inner-city schools. They attended weekly seminars and interacted with their mentor and with other teachers. They lived and, presumable, moved about in one of the world's most diverse cities. Could anyone, with confidence, claim that change or lack of change in trainees' views can be attributed to any single strand of this skein of experience?

## Analysis of Multicultural Week

### Organization

The 15 sessions conducted during Multicultural Week were of two types. The first type consisted of sessions attended by all trainees together. These one-hour plenary sessions inaugurated the mornings and the afternoons each day. After these sessions, trainees

divided into five groups and, across the week, attended five, two-hour small group sessions. (See Table 1, after page 10, for the titles and presenters of these various sessions.)

**Objectives**

The various presenters, explicitly or implicitly, set one of four objectives for their sessions:

1. To influence trainees' attitudes toward children culturally different from themselves and toward including information on cultural minorities and their contributions to history and knowledge.

2. To inform trainees about the history, customs, language, family life, religion, values and intragroup differences of various groups including Asian Americans, African Americans, and Mexican Americans and other Latinos.

3. To inform trainees about the effects of teacher behaviors (expectations and differences in "learning styles") on the achievement of students from non-Anglo backgrounds.

4. To demonstrate pedagogical techniques--for dealing with controversial topics in the classroom, for learning cooperatively, for incorporating information on African-American leaders in teaching, and for assessing students' "learning style."

In the first instance, attitude is the object: The presenter assumes that at least some of the audience hold attitudes and beliefs that constrict opportunities for certain children to learn. In the other three instances, knowledge is the object: The presenter assumes that at least some of the audience lack information, ideas, or know-how that would enable them to help children from diverse backgrounds learn.

**Specific Topics or Activities**

The specific topics fall into three groups: dispositions required for good multicultural teaching, information on specific groups, and specific pedagogical techniques. Exhorting teachers to adopt particular attitudes and behaviors is the first group of topics. Within this group, the most common activity was exhorting teachers to accept and value the customs, commitments, history, and languages of students from cultural groups that differ from that of the teacher. "I can't show you all there is to culture, other than just ideas, and the bottom line is that you have to learn to observe and respect" (Calvin).[7] Teachers were further urged, by some presenters, to include in the curriculum references to non-Anglo

[7]All names identifying quotations are pseudonyms for program presenters.

culture and to create opportunities for students from such cultures to talk about their experiences:

> A lot of times especially secondary teachers will always say, "Hey I don't have time to do . . . Japanese cherry blossoms, or I don't time to do the African Mass. I don't have time to do all these things." But . . . the teachers that [are] teaching the secondary children must find ways to make every child in that classroom feel a part of the learning experience, by finding out the mores, and the values, and the culture. By having children share their experiences so that no child in that classroom feels embarrassed or humiliated or put down because his culture is different from that of another. (Columba)

> During part of your lesson, during the year or even if you are talking and interacting with the students you can invite them to share something about . . . "Well, how do they do it in your country?" or "How is it in your country--those kinds of things?" And it makes them feel good and a lot of this has to do with positive reinforcement. Getting the kids to feel good about themselves because if they feel good, if you make them feel good about themselves, the sky's the limit. (Coral)

While some presenters exhorted teachers to create opportunities for students, as members of ethnic and national groups, to talk about their experiences, others emphasized that teachers should treat students as individuals, not as representatives of a group:

> This gentleman [referring to one of the participants] made a statement here that I would just like to underline. He says he treats his children of Hispanic heritage the way that he treats his "basic," would you call [them your] English-primary-language-speaking children? And I think that is important for us to remember. We're dealing with human beings. We come from the human experience, the human basis first. I think a lot of things will come naturally in time. (Corrisa)

Other presenters also urged teachers to view their students as individuals rather than as representatives of particular ethnic groups:

> Basically, if education is to prepare students to live in our pluralistic society, students must learn to understand their rights and the rights of others and develop concern for the well-being and the dignity of each individual. And when we begin to clump people, we forget about the individual in all of this process. (Cadler)

Teachers are, thus, exhorted to (a) incorporate references to other cultures in their teaching and encourage students to talk about their experience in other cultures and (b) view students as individuals rather than representatives of a culture.

The second group of topics consisted of specific information about the cultural groups that represent most of the students in the Los Angeles public schools: Latinos, African Americans, and Asians. Three sessions were devoted to Latinos; the bulk of these sessions focused on Mexicans and Chicanos, the largest single ethnic group in the schools. Participants heard about Mexican and Chicano language, food, religion, customs, and attitudes toward school, women, and work. Three presenters devoted significant portions of their sessions to generalizations about Mexican and Mexican-American customs and the family:

> Oh, another thing that you need to know is that Mexican family life is basically very, very conservative. It's strong. You know it's patriarchal. (Corrisa)
>
> Customs, especially in regards to the protection of women with the more recent arrivals [from Mexico], the protection and, at the same time, women knowing their place, are very rigid. (Crystal)
>
> Mexicans, our proxemics are closer, we like to get close to people, we touch them a lot, kissy-kissy. . . . My cousin, when [he's] walking down the street with me, sometimes he puts his arm around me. . . . At first I couldn't get used to that. I said, "Wait a minute, they're going to think . . . ." No! It's just that we do a lot of touchy-touchy in our culture. We do a lot of handshaking. We grab each other and we start throwing each other around and so on. (Calvin)

Two sessions were devoted to Asian students and their cultures. These sessions were similarly laced with generalizations about Asians:

> Here's some general, broad, commonalities among the Asians. Under familial: Respect the elders. Papa may be known as, "Yes, sir!" The male has precedence over female in status. The girl may be the oldest sibling and the only boy is the youngest of a family of eight. Now, that little brat can tell the older sister what to do. Because the male child carries on the family name. (Corrine)

The one session that focused specifically on African Americans offered information on the history of the African-American experience--particularly, the Civil Rights movement--and on Black English. Generalizations about African-American culture were rare.

Other sessions provided information that was more general in character. Two of the presenters lectured on the role of expectations and referred to the "Pygmalion" research on

the effects of teacher expectations on student performance (Dusek, 1985; Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968; for a critical review of this literature, see Wineberg, 1987). Another presented demographic data to demonstrate the rapid growth of the number of children of color in the schools. Two others lectured on the meaning of culture and one of these presenters explained the concept of cultural taboos. Two presenters also provided general definitions of racism and prejudice.

Finally, some presenters urged particular pedagogical techniques on the trainees. These included using games for learning about African Americans, working information on ethnic groups into subject matter teaching such as mathematics and science, using cooperative learning techniques such as jigsawing[8] as an alternative to ability grouping, and using a particular model for dealing with controversial subjects in the classroom.

**Percentage of Participant Talk**

To gauge, however roughly, the contribution of trainees to the sessions as well as the value that presenters placed on the trainees' experience, we compared the number of words spoken by participants to the number spoken by presenters (see Methods above). As Table 1 indicates, in none of the sessions did the participants talk as much as the presenter. In only two sessions did the participants' talk constitute more that a third of the total talk. In six sessions, participants talked 11 percent of the time or less. Across the entire week, teacher trainees talked less than one-quarter of the time.

This finding should be viewed in conjunction with the above discussion of format. That presenters dominated "air time" in sessions may be less significant than the type of discourse the format allowed. As noted above, most trainee talk was in response to questions, posed by the presenter, that required short answers.

**Summary of Multicultural Week**

The content and pedagogy of LAUSD's Multicultural Week is familiar to anyone acquainted with multicultural courses offered as part of preservice and staff development programs. The general message to the trainees across the week seemed to be

- Accept and respect students whose values, language, habits, priorities, dress, and commitments are different from your own
- In teaching, include information on and references to the role and contributions of individuals and groups historically underrepresented in the curriculum

[8]In jigsawing, students work with a group to develop expertise on a subject, problem, or text. Subsequently, they join another group and serve as the expert on the matter they have investigated with the first group. For more details, see Aronson (1978).

**Table 1**

**Summary of Sessions, LAUSD Multicultural Week**

| Type & Title of Session | Time (Hrs.) | Presenter[a] | Topics or Activities | Format | Participant talk (%)[b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Informational–General | | | | | |
| Prejudice workshop | 2 | C | Labeling groups; combating prejudice; ability grouping; teacher expectations; film of KKK, accepting cultural differences, implications of population growth rates of minorities | Lecture<br>Q & A<br>Film | 11 |
| Integrating Multicultural in subject areas | 1 | C | Working diversity into content areas; cultural differences in values, behaviors, customs | Lecture<br>Small group | 30 |
| Streams of culture | 2 | DA | Understanding the culture-building capacity of all groups; systems of cultural rules; cultural systems change over time; dress as an expression of cultural norms; taboos | Q & A | 24 |
| Institutional racism | 1 | UF | All children can learn; defining prejudice, institutional racism; teacher expectations; tracking & ability grouping | Lecture<br>Q & A<br>Worksheets | 27 |
| Valuing differences | 2 | C | Recognizing & accommodating differences in learning styles; discussion of learning from experience; describes experience of growing up Japanese in U.S.; differences in ways of working & thinking; discussion of Gregorc's learning styles | Discussion<br>Lecture<br>Small group | 40 |
| Informational–Specific Group(s) | | | | | |
| Culture in the classroom | 1 | UF | Importance of knowing about & valuing minority cultures; Chicano culture: language, surnames, food, normative behaviors, values | Lecture | 9 |
| Working with secondary Hispanic students | 1 | DA | Speaker's Hispanic family background; Hispanic students from Central America; need for teachers to be counselors, positive reinforcers; get students to share culture in class | Lecture<br>Q & A | 32 |
| Mexican-American culture | 2 | T | Education valued differently in U.S. & Mexico; speaker's background in Chicano family & community; describes Mexican-Am. family values: patriarchal, conservative, respect for elders, family-first, Catholic | Lecture<br>Q & A<br>Discussion | 32 |
| Hispanic culture; Family imprinting | 1 | DA | Speaker relates remembrances of Chicano childhood; customs, language, values, of Chicanos & other Latinos | Lecture | 11 |

| Type & Title of Session | Time (Hrs.) | Presenter[a] | Topics or Activities | Format | Participant talk (%)[b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Working with Asian students | 2 | T | Participants generate stereotypes of Asians; speaker challenges stereotypes; identifies cultural differences among Asian national & religious groups | Lecture Q & A | 18 |
| Understanding the black experience | 1 | DA | Describes the role that expectations play in student achievement | Lecture | 11 |
| Learning styles | 1 | DA | Values of Asian children: respect elders, male precedence, importance of names, ethnocentrism; family expectation for academic achievement; aversion to confrontation | Lecture | 2 |
| History & current problems of black students | 2 | T | Identifying black leaders, historical figures; effects of civil rights movement; small-group jigsaw: "forerunners" to recent civil rights activities, Black English | Game Lecture Small group | 47 |
| Exhortation | | | | | |
| A multicultural approach to education | 1 | BA | Speaker relates experiences teaching & administrating; extols high expectations, the cultural customs & backgrounds of others | Lecture | 2 |
| Teaching Techniques | | | | | |
| Dealing with controversy | 2 | C | Speaker describes model for treating controversies (e.g., nuclear war) in the classroom; film demonstrating model in use; groups discuss using model, generate list of controversial issues | Lecture Small group Brainstorm Film | 29 |

[a]BA = Building administrator; C = Consultant; DA = District administrator; T = Teacher; UF = University faculty

[b]Determined by counting the total words in the transcription of the audiotape made of each session, subtracting out the words spoken by the presenter(s), adding 750 words for each five minutes of small group work, and adding two percent to each total to compensate for participant talk not captured by the audiotape.

- Don't judge students' capabilities or potential by their membership in a particular ethnic group
- Know the history, customs, patterns of family life, values, food, and language of the groups represented in the classroom to enable you to teach students from these groups better

At the same time, the dominant pedagogy was lecturing. Participants, for the most part, sat and listened to presentations by district administrators and specialist, teachers, and consultants, including two university faculty.

## Trainees' Views of Cultural Differences

### Reactions to Stereotypes

Most proponents of multicultural education seem to agree that a necessary first step in helping teachers and prospective teachers work with students culturally different from themselves is getting the teachers to view and respond to their students as individuals rather than as representatives of a particular group. Yet, as the analysis of Multicultural Week above reveals, generalizations are the currency of multicultural education. How do teachers' perceptions of teaching culturally different learners comport with this apparent paradox?

To address this question, we presented trainees with a classroom scenario and then asked them what they thought of an explanation proffered by colleagues for the physical marginalization of Native-American students in their classroom:

**Scenario #1**

> Imagine that you have been hired midway through the school year to take over for a teacher who is going on maternity leave. During the first day, you notice a group of Native Americans sitting together at the back of the class, while white and Asian-American students are sitting in front. The Native-American students don't volunteer to answer questions or to participate in discussions. Later, when you mention this to colleagues in the teachers' lounge, they tell you that the Native-American students are naturally shy and that asking them questions embarrasses them so it's best not to call on them.
>
> What do you think of the teachers' explanation of the Native-American students' behavior?
>
> How would you deal with the Native-American students in this class?

As Table 2 shows, before the Multicultural Week (MCW), a third of the teacher trainees accepted the stereotype of Native Americans as "shy" while just over 40 percent reject the characterization as a stereotype. When presented with the same scenario and asked the same question nine months later, only two teacher trainees gave responses that differed from their initial answers. One trainee who originally accepted the stereotype as true subsequently rejected the characterization while another who had initially rejected the stereotype accepted it as true nine months later. The dilemma of using generalizations to inform teachers about various cultural groups and, at the same time, exhorting teachers to treat learners as individuals rather than as representatives of cultural groups is evident in this response:

> It could be accurate. I'm not sure if that's a stereotype. I'm not too familiar with it. My exposure to Native-American students isn't that great so I don't have many personal experiences to draw upon. That could be correct, to some degree, generalization. (Carol, post-MCW)

When she was asked this question during her interview prior to Multicultural Week, Carol had answered that "we all have stereotypes and we lead our lives using them." Her views persisted not merely through the Multicultural Week but through a year of teaching, of weekly program meetings, and of being mentored. Another trainee demonstrated a similar willingness to accept stereotypes as valid information: "I think it might be a cultural stereotype and it might be true" (Caroline, post-MCW).

Other trainees weren't sure whether or not this particular characterization of Native-American students was accurate but didn't appear to find the use of stereotypes objectionable: "I would take it as information given, as data, input, and I would probably test it myself, out of curiosity to see if it was valid or not" (Clark, post-MCW). Those trainees who rejected the stereotype recognized that "Native-American students are shy" is an overgeneralized characterization:

> But just to run off a whole group of people and say that whole group, nationality, minority, whatever, is . . . just naturally shy and write it off [and decide] that they don't have to participate--that's silliness. (Cain, post-MCW)

> I think that generalizations are stereotypes. I don't ever group people by their [ethnicity]--a white student or an Asian student or . . . I mean, they're a student period and even within white students or within Native-American students or whatever groupings there are variations. (Catherine, pre-MCW)

None of the trainees questioned the use of "Native American" to describe the widely diverse groups of indigenous peoples in the United States. Presenters during Multicultural

**Table 2**

**Percent of Respondents With Each Reaction to Stereotype as Explanation for Student Behavior**

| Reaction | LAUSD Pre-MCW[a] ($N$ = 12) | LAUSD Post-MCW ($N$ = 11) | ABCD[b] Posttraining ($N$ = 13) | Preservice[c] Postprogram ($N$ = 38) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accepts stereotype as true | 33 | 27 | 23 | 24 |
| Not sure if stereotype is accurate | 17 | 18 | 8 | 18 |
| Rejects stereotype | 42 | 45 | 54 | 45 |
| Reaction not clear | 8 | 9 | 15 | 13 |
| TOTALS[d] | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

[a]MCW = Multicultural Week.

[b]This sample consisted of students in preservice teacher education programs at five Michigan universities. Students volunteered to attend the ABCD workshop. They do not constitute a random sample.

[c]Students in this sample were randomly selected from all students in their teacher education program. Students come from four different institutions that were selected as a purposeful sample. Students were interviewed during the term in which they did their student teaching.

[d]Totals of more or less than 100 percent are due to rounding.

Sources: Teacher Education and Learning to Teach study, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1990; Evaluation of the Accepting Behaviors for Culturally Different Students, Michigan Department of Education, Office of Professional Development, 1990.

**Scenario #2**

Mrs. Jones's Classroom

Mrs. Jones teaches a large first-grade class. She tries to find ways to individualize while still maintaining order. Below are descriptions of some of Mrs. Jones's students, along with examples of how she works with them.

Vikki is a shy Vietnamese girl. She was recently adopted and her English still sounds awkward. Her parents buy her many dresses and put ribbons in her long hair every day. She is very cooperative in the classroom but tends not to play with the other children. Today, Mrs. Jones has Vikki matching geometric shapes. she moves past Vikki's desk regularly, often patting her on the head or back as she passes, and sometimes stopping to present a new, more challenging shape for Vikki to try to match.

Brian, a black child, just joined the class this month. His father is a corporate executive and moves frequently. As soon as Brian enrolled in school, his mother volunteered to work in Mrs. Jones's classroom each week. Brian is very competitive. He has joined the junior basketball, soccer and softball leagues, and has started swimming lessons. At his mother's request, Mrs. Jones moved James away from Brian's table so that the two boys would not fight. Today Brian is working in a self-contained learning center. He is looking at a picture book and using a tape recorder to dictate a story to go with the pictures. Mrs. Jones will play the tape to the rest of the class after recess.

James, another black student, is so active he sometimes disrupts the other children. His mother never graduated from high school and never married. She relies on her family and on welfare for support. James hasn't as many nice clothes as some other children and sometimes he expresses resentment toward other students in the class. Mrs. Jones has moved James several times because he was disrupting other children. Today, Mrs. Jones has James practicing writing the letters "m" and "n." She tries to keep him on task by frequent comments. Today, her comments included these:

You've made a lot of progress today, James. Let's see how many more letters you can do before recess.

I like the way James is working quietly today.

These letters look much more neat than they did last week.

Don't lean back in your chair, James.

Week had taken pains to point out the range of cultures masked by labels such as "Asian American" or "Latino." Perhaps in the context of the interview, the trainees did not feel they could or should challenge the researchers' conceptions. As several of them explained, they had had little or no contact with Native Americans and, consequently, knew little about their cultures or current issues.

In sum, trainees appeared to be no more likely to reject stereotypes of students after Multicultural Week than they were before. Fewer than half of the trainees, either before or after the training, rejected the overgeneralized statement that "Native Americans are shy." Finally, none of the trainees questioned using the label "Native American" to describe the diverse groups of indigenous Americans.

**Perceptions of Differences in Academic Opportunity**

A second scenario item was designed to elicit teacher trainees' understandings of the effects that different tasks have on students' attitudes, behaviors, and opportunities to learn. The item is also intended to tap teachers' awareness of teachers' responses to stereotypes of learners. In Scenario #2, the teacher has assigned different tasks to three students of color. The tasks represent subject matter in distinctly different ways and have the potential for distinctly different learning consequences. For instance, while one student is practicing writing two letters, another is taping a story he will later play for the entire class. A few details about the children's family circumstances are added to see how respondents regard such information in making decisions about task assignments.

The responses of the LAUSD teacher trainees are shown in Table 3. We coded the responses for whether or not the trainee even noticed the differences in the tasks that the teacher had assigned to different students. If they did notice the differences, we further coded if they noted that different tasks have different consequences for learning the subject matter and for students' sense of themselves as learners. As Table 3 shows, most trainees both before and after the Multicultural Week did not discuss the differences in tasks that the students had been assigned. Instead, they generally approved of the teacher's decision to individualize tasks for each of the students and of her use of "positive reinforcement."

> I think she is responding very well. Because [Vikki] is being given lots of affirmation. Vikki is shy and she's passing her desk regularly patting her on the back, on the head, letting her know--that's a way that says "Yes" to Vikki. Brian has very special needs. You know, he's bright, he's also middle class. I can see why he and James fight. . . . They're both black kids. Brian's father is a corporate executive, and his mother can afford the time to volunteer in his classroom. James doesn't have a daddy and his mother is on welfare. Sure, I can see why they would fight. It's kind of sad, but . . . that's the reality. [They would fight] because the differences are so severe. (Chad, post-MCW)

> Oh, I think she responds real well: patting the Vietnamese on the back, giving her some encouragement. Bolstering the second kid's ego, and, the last kid, James, is a little bit of a problem, but I think she, she does some good stuff. (Caroline, post-MCW)

> I think she's doing a good job. . . . This is just three students and it says she teaches a large first-grade class. I don't know how she can keep this up with all the other students, this much individualized stuff. But, I mean, I would try to do this. I think I'd burn out real fast though on trying to do this many individual type things with an entire class. (Catherine, post-MCW)

None of the trainees before and only two after the Multicultural Week noticed that the teacher seemed to be relying on stereotypes in her treatment of the students: Vikki, the Vietnamese girl, gets a pat on the head; James, the African-American student from an impoverished single-parent home, is isolated and given a mechanical, repetitive task; Brian, the son of an executive and a mother actively involved in his school experience, tapes a story which he will later play for classmates.

> The Vietnamese girl is treated the way you would expect her to be treated, the other more competitive student is treated the way you would expect him to be treated, and the problem child is treated the way you would expect him to be treated--isolated. (Cecil, post-MCW)

> I'd say it's a classic response. She's . . . biased toward the wealthier child. That's something that's probably cultural--I think most teachers are. . . . Her bias comes through because the kid, Brian, who[se] parents are wealthy . . . [is] given the more entertaining task. Whereas the other kid, James, who is poor, is given the boring task. [As for] Vikki: [the teacher] also might think that Asian students are better mathematically or something. Or because her task seems to me the most challenging one, working with geometric shapes. And . . . she is most physical with Vikki. She, you know, pats her on the head or hand, says all positive things. And she gives her challenging questions to Brian . . . whereas to James, she tries to encourage him but [gives him] just minor tasks. (Christopher, post-MCW)

While this last quotation is taken from Christopher's post-Multicultural Week interview, he had noted the differences in the tasks in his first interview as well.

All but two of the trainees approved of the teachers' treatment of the students, although seven trainees before and five trainees after the Multicultural Weeks questioned the wisdom of the social isolation that attends individualizing instruction:

> Okay, with Vikki, since she's very cooperative in the classroom but tends not to play with the other children. I would somehow try to get activities for the

**Table 3**

**Percent of Respondents With Each Reaction to Differences in Academic Tasks**

| Reaction | LAUSD Pre-MCW[a] ($N$ = 12) | LAUSD Post-MCW ($N$ = 11) | ABCD[b] Posttraining ($N$ = 13) | Preservice[c] Postprogram ($N$ = 38) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Addresses differences | 33 | 18 | 38 | 38 |
| Addresses consequences | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2 |
| Doesn't address differences | 66 | 82 | 54 | 60 |
| TOTALS[d] | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

[a]MCW = Multicultural Week.

[b]This sample consisted of students in preservice teacher education programs at five Michigan universities. Students volunteered to attend the ABCD workshop. They do not constitute a random sample.

[c]Students in this sample were randomly selected from all students in their teacher education program. Students come from four different institutions that were selected as a purposeful sample. Students were interviewed during the term in which they did their student teaching.

[d]Totals of more or less than 100 percent are due to rounding.

Sources: Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 1990; Evaluation of the Accepting Behaviors for Culturally Different Students, Michigan Department of Education, Office of Professional Development, 1990.

> class. She seems to be breaking things up, a lot more individualized, but I would definitely try to get her involved in interaction, interactive-type things to try to get her to overcome this inability to play with other children. (Catherine, post-MCW)

In conclusion, when presented with a scenario in which children of color has been assigned different and unequal learning tasks, the trainees in the LAUSD didn't focus on the consequences of such differentiation. Whereas they seem to pay scant attention to the teacher's apparent stereotyping in her interactions with the students and her assignment of academic tasks, they notice and approve of individualized instruction and the use of "positive reinforcement."

## Discussion[9]

### The Curriculum: The Role of Generalizations in Teaching

The curriculum of Multicultural Week seems to make a lot of sense. In part, the curriculum is posited on the eminently sensible idea that the more people know about others who are different from themselves, the less likely they will view these others negatively (for a review of research on the effects of increased information and education on identifying overgeneralizations, see Pate, 1988). Pointing out the deleterious effects of prejudice and differential expectations and exhorting teachers to avoid these pitfalls is a second reasonable, time-honored approach. As moral actors in a democratic society, teachers have an obligation to provide all children with equal opportunities to learn. Finally, demonstrating certain classroom techniques ("craft skills" as one of the presenters called them) such as cooperative learning and urging teachers to use these to increase intergroup interaction has long been standard fare in teacher education. That these three approaches are common to multicultural courses and workshops in various settings--university preservice programs and state- or district-sponsored staff development--seems to underline the sensibility of the curriculum (McDiarmid, 1989; McDiarmid and Price, 1990).

Juxtaposed against the face validity of this curriculum is the failure of schools to make headway against the current of low test scores, high dropout rates, and declining college attendance rates that runs through various ethnic communities, most notably, Latino and African American. In the broader society, many people of color remain economically, politically, and socially marginal, without access to the resources required to participate fully in the economy or society. Confronted with evidence of the apparent ineffectiveness

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[9]With appropriate feelings of guilt and complicity in muddled thinking we discuss curriculum and pedagogy as separate issues. We make such a distinction purely for purposes of exposition. In teaching, content and pedagogy are inextricably intertwined. We apologize for perpetuating such an invidious duality.

of this curriculum in preparing teachers to help children of color learn, promoters counter with one or both of the following arguments: (a) The number of teachers exposed to this curriculum has not yet reached the critical mass needed to make substantive changes in the way we educate poor children and those of color; and (b) the curriculum has not been properly enacted. When enough teachers know enough about the backgrounds of culturally different children, their school performance will improve.

If the problem were principally a matter of teachers' knowledge of culturally different students' backgrounds, we should expect that students of color would do significantly and consistently better in the classrooms of teachers who share their backgrounds. Yet, the evidence that we do have doesn't support such a conclusion.[10] Certainly, many, if not most, teachers and prospective teachers know embarrassingly little about the history of this and other countries and the struggles of various groups to maintain their human dignity and to achieve some measure of equality.

Recent investigations of secondary and college students' knowledge and understanding of history argue for more intensive and challenging opportunities to learn and learn *about* history than students, including prospective teachers, presently encounter (Bennett, 1984; McDiarmid, in progress; Ravitch, 1989; Ravitch and Finn, 1987). Teachers unfamiliar with Reconstruction and its legacies, the struggle for civil rights, and the FBI's surveillance and harassment of African-American leaders and organizations lack knowledge essential to understanding our current world, the continuing struggle of people of color, and debates over the role of schools and other institutions in that struggle. Teachers unacquainted with the special legal status of Native Americans and the government's history of abrogating treaty agreements and using schools to deracinate Native children are unlikely to appreciate the debate over tribal sovereignty or Native parents' suspicions about textbooks, curriculum, and non-Native teachers (Ongtooguk, personal communication).

An examination of historical developments and their contemporary significance is not, however, the kind of propositional knowledge teachers typically encounter. More likely, teachers will hear about generalized characteristics of various groups with, occasionally, some vague reference to historical circumstances. Designers of multicultural courses could justifiably argue that such fundamental historical knowledge is really the province of secondary and undergraduate history courses. The evidence is, however, that few students are developing such knowledge in these settings. Knowledge of this type is, arguably, essential if teachers are to understand the school experiences of children from groups who have historically been denied genuinely equal access to knowledge and other resources.

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[10]This isn't to say that the reasons for actively recruiting more people of color into teaching are any less compelling. While the importance of role models for children is the rationale frequently offered for redoubling efforts to recruit teachers of color, more compelling is the argument that failure to attract more people of color into teaching constitutes a loss of human resources. Not only do schools and children miss out on the knowledge and talents of people of color, they miss the experiences and perspectives these people bring as members of particular cultures.

Again, however, the connection between such teachers' knowledge of the historical and cultural background of learners and teachers' capacity to assist culturally different children develop meaningful understandings of subject matter is, at best, speculative and tenuous.[11]

At the heart of the part of the multicultural curriculum that consists of generalized propositions about different human groups is a dilemma that purveyors of the curriculum have not acknowledged and, therefore, have not explored: Describing cultural groups requires the use of generalizations. Yet, a universal purpose of the multicultural curriculum is to expose the logical and moral problems inherent in prejudging individuals on the basis of their membership in a particular groups. "The Mexican family is basically very, very conservative" (Corrisa); "Customs [include] . . . women knowing their place" (Crystal); "Mexicans . . . like to get close to people, . . . touch them a lot" (Calvin)--are typical of the kind of generalizations made about ethnic groups. What are teachers to do with this information? Presenters no doubt believe such information will help teachers understand better the values and behaviors of culturally different children and their parents, thereby reducing the possibility that misunderstandings will sabotage children's opportunities to learn. On the critical point of how such generalizations are to inform what teachers actually do with pupils in their classrooms to help them learn, however, the voluble presenters were conspicuously silent.

At least some of the teacher trainees seem to be aware of the dilemma. The participant quoted below spoke up during a session entitled "Working with Hispanic Secondary Students":

> The problem is that we're told all the time that this is a group and that we're supposed to look upon their cultural background. So every time that I get an insight from somebody about [culturally different learners], that automatically translates in my mind and I think it would be very difficult not for it to be . . . a stereotype. . . . So, I think that for me, what I've got to do is somehow take what I'm getting here [in this course] about this multicultural experience and forget about it. . . . I want to go out and do what you say: Go around and encourage [my students] and don't care whether they have 14 children in their family or 2, whether they're from Bolivia or from Africa. And so, consequently I'm getting a double message. It's becoming a little confusing to me. (Trainee comment in Coral session)

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[11]The author and his colleagues explored this idea in a series of portraits of teachers who taught Alaska Natives in remote rural schools (McDiarmid, Kleinfeld, and Parrett, 1987). The teachers, identified by educators and community members alike as "effective," actively sought information on their students. The information they gathered was not, however, propositional knowledge about the students' cultural heritage--although the teachers did collect quite a bit of such information. Rather, teachers sought information about individual students--their family and social life and their out-of-school activities--and about the present life of the community--family feuds and alliances; life-marking events such as death and births; and key institutions such as the church, bingo night, and community basketball. In the eyes of the teacher, such information was critical to their instructional activities.

Another teacher trainee immediately echoed this observation:

> It seems to be . . . the problem of "Treat me differently because I'm different, but don't treat me differently because I'm the same and I deserve the same treatment as everyone else." I'm constantly trying [to be sensitive to cultural differences] . . . but I like to look at my students as people and I try to treat them all equally. I can't expect to [learn these] . . . generalizations and hope not to be stereotyped in my treatment of them. (Trainee comment in Coral session)

These teacher trainees appear to recognize the danger of generalizations about students.[12] The most obvious danger is that of overgeneralizing and treating students as instances of a set of general characteristics attributed to the group of which they are a part. Assuming that a Athapaskan student is shy because he is a Native American is an example. Perhaps more insidious is what Mason (1989) has recently called "a fundamental epistemological error." The error consists in moving from a description of behavior ("he is acting shyly") to labelling the person ("he *is* shy"). Such errors frequently result in misunderstandings because people "are led by people-labelling to interpret descriptions of behavior as descriptions of intentions," (p. 311) despite the fact that labels probably don't describe what people are experiencing.

Are the Athapaskan students at the back of the class feeling shy or are they experiencing other feelings such as alienation and detachment from the activities and content of the class? Are they all feeling the same thing because they happen to be members of the same ethnic group? As Mason (1989) points out, labels, once applied, are unlikely to change because we tend to look for confirmation, not counterevidence. Moreover, people may come to accept "misplaced descriptions as descriptions of themselves, to integrate the descriptions into their self-image, and to act as if the label accurately describes how they do or should act" (p. 312).

The paradox of the Multicultural Week curriculum may be less the use of generalizations to communicate what is culturally distinctive about Latinos, Asians, and African Americans and more that none of the presenters explicitly acknowledge what at least some of the trainees understand: Generalizations about students are problematic in teaching. As one of the trainees noted in her response to the stereotype scenario, "I think we all have stereotypes and we lead our lives using them to some degree" (Carol, pre-MCW). Rather than an opportunity for teacher trainees to surface and discuss

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[12]As these comments were volunteered during a session, we have no way of knowing how widely this view was shared among trainees. Incidentally, the presenter in this session afforded trainees more opportunities to talk than did the typical presenter during the week.

generalizations about students and their place in teaching, Multicultural Week offered additional generalizations.

**The Curriculum: Exhortations**

Exhortations to set high expectations for all students, the second element in the multicultural curriculum, seems similarly ineffective in promoting the learning of culturally different children. In fact, some evidence from the TELT study seems to show that preservice teachers, all of whom are exposed to the expectations literature, are more willing rather than less willing to differentiate in setting goals for students (McDiarmid, 1989). As we saw in their responses to the first-grade scenario above, few of the teacher trainees we interviewed noticed that students had been assigned tasks that afforded dramatically different opportunities to learn--or, if they did notice, found such differentiation unproblematic. Neither did most of them notice that the tasks might indicate that the teacher was responding through her stereotypes of the children rather than directly to the individually child. While "all children can learn" has become the latest mantra of teacher education, the evidence is that many teachers and prospective teachers continue to believe that not all children can learn the same things (McDiarmid, 1989; McDiarmid and Price, 1990). Most teachers, including those in the TTP program, continue to support tracking (TELT, 1989). From other research, we know that poor children and those of color are disproportionately represented in vocational and technical tracks and so-called "low-ability" groups (Oakes, 1985).

**Pedagogy: Opportunities Lost**

Just as the curriculum seems to make sense, the pedagogy appears both reasonable and normal. When you have a lot of information to communicate, lecture. If you want to change people's attitudes, exhort and appeal to their sense of justice. For variety's sake, show a video, do some small-group activities, or play a game. The pedagogy that characterized Multicultural Week mirrors that common in university and preuniversity, particularly secondary, classrooms: Teacher talks, students listen.

So what's the problem? To say that the pedagogy is familiar, widespread, and reasonable is to say little about its effectiveness. Preservice teacher education, which employs much the same pedagogy as that we observed during Multicultural Week, is somewhat infamous for its failure to change significantly what prospective teachers learn from their apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975; for a discussion of research on preservice teachers' knowledge and belief, see McDiarmid, 1990). The data we have presented here, in Tables 2 and 3, drawn from teachers in distinctly different sites--one

based in a school district, the other in state department of education[13]--should raise more questions about the potential of this pedagogy to influence significantly teachers' thinking about cultural differences and their role in teaching and learning. For instance, the research on the ABCD project in Michigan in which the pedagogy was virtually the same yielded results similar to those in Los Angeles: Student teachers' views of cultural differences and their role in the classroom appeared unchanged as a result of the program. As in the TTP, the quality of the program directors and personnel was high and the curriculum similar.

Without denying that some teachers do, in fact, learn from this pedagogy, we may well ask why so many apparently seem to learn so little. Noting that cognitive approaches do seem to have some effect, however limited, on students' prejudices, Pate (1988) warns that having students digest factual information is not enough. He draws a quotation from Moreland to make his point:

> We need to realize that, although sound knowledge is necessary to combat false information, it is not sufficient to change attitude. Facts do not speak for themselves; rather they are interpreted through the experience and biases of those hearing them (Moreland cited in Pate, 1988, p. 288).

Moreland's warning echoes what cognitive psychologist have come to understand about how we learn (see Duckworth, 1987; Resnick, 1983, 1989). Resnick (1989) writes: "Learning occurs not by recording information but by interpreting it. Effective learning depends on the intentions, self-monitoring, elaborations, and representational constructions of the individual learner" (p. 2). When we encounter new experiences and information, we make sense of this through frameworks that we have built up out of our prior experiences and within a particular social context. The kind of pedagogy that dominated Multicultural Week in which the presenters talked at least 75 percent of the time ignores the active role that teachers play in making sense out of what they encounter.

This is not to argue that beginning teachers should be left to figure out everything for themselves anymore than students should be left to "discover" knowledge. Teaching in a way that recognizes and capitalizes on the learning process requires teachers to maximize opportunities for learners to express the sense they are making out of whatever they encounter. Only then do the teachers know whether their learners are developing the kinds of understandings they want them to develop--understandings that are both true to the best thinking in a given field and that increase learners' sense of control over their world. Knowledge of where learners are in constructing such understandings would be critical for

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[13]We are not referring here to the data from our preservice sites. For the two scenarios from which we are drawing our data, we do not have preprogram data on the preservice teachers in our sample. Consequently, we do not know about the effects of the program on their responses. For participants in both Multicultural Week and the ABCD project of the Michigan Department of Education, we have both pre- and postworkshop data.

the teacher to decide which of several options to pursue next, which of the many strands that arise in a discussion to pursue immediately, which to hold in abeyance, which to shelve.

Given that our knowledge of how to teach culturally different children is, at best, speculative, uncertain, and contentious, a pedagogy that enables teachers to talk together about the kinds of problems they encounter and the various ways they might address these seems appropriate. In such an arrangement, teacher educators--whether in school districts or in universities--would use their expertise less as "knowledge bases" from which they dispense information and more as "places" from which to view the teacher trainees' experiences and from which to ask questions about those experiences and the lessons teachers draw from them (McDiarmid, 1990). Rather than an expert, the teacher educator is more of--to borrow Hawkins's (1974) phrase--an "external feedback loop."

**Conclusions: A Few Questions**

Our analysis of data on LAUSD's Multicultural Week and on the teacher trainees' views of teaching culturally different students raises a number of issues for teach educators to consider:

- How can we avoid the dangers inherent in generalizing about cultural groups when we think and talk about culturally different learners? How can we assist beginning teachers in being thoughtful about the role that culture--values, behaviors, language--may play in learning and, at the same time, help them avoid prejudging students on the basis of their ethnicity or class?

- What formats and pedagogies other than those that typify multicultural workshops and course are promising? What kinds of formats would enable prospective and practicing teachers to bring to the surface and examine their views of those culturally different from themselves? People's views of themselves and others are the products of a lifetime. Are people likely to reexamine such views on the basis of a five-day workshop? What kinds of long-range support and opportunities do teachers require to examine their understanding of those culturally different from themselves and how these understandings shape their pedagogy?

- What's the effect on teachers' capacity to reason through situations in culturally diverse classrooms of splitting off issues of teaching culturally different students from issues such as what teachers need to know about subject matter, how different subjects are learned, and the role of the teacher? In LAUSD, the Multicultural Week came nearly a full year after the initial sessions for the teacher trainees. What does this communicate to teachers about (a) the importance of the issues and (b) the relationship between knowing learners' cultural background and knowing about subject matter, managing instruction, and so on?

- In situations such as that in LAUSD where teacher trainees have been in their own classrooms for a year, what is the place of the trainees' teaching experiences in the

curriculum? Could such experiences, rather than information on ethnic groups, exhortations, and techniques, constitute the primary "subject" of the curriculum? In such a curriculum, the knowledge and experience of "experts"--whether other teachers, university faculty, or district personnel--would constitute resources on which the teacher trainees could draw to understand their experience and consider alternatives.

In closing, we are not optimistic about the prospects for changes in multicultural education. The curriculum, as we noted, has a lot of face validity. Moreover, such a curriculum meets the criteria embodied in state and district policy mandates for "multicultural awareness." Finally, a small "industry" has developed around the issue. Academics and consultants both inside and outside of universities have developed presentations that are in great demand around the country as, increasingly, state and local school boards require districts and schools to provide some kind of multicultural training.

State, district, and local administrators, even those who may question the effectiveness of the current curriculum, are limited by what is available. Who, for instance, can they hire or assign to the kind of long-term collaborative work such as that suggested above? In contrast, people who can conduct sessions on cooperative learning, the cultural background of Chicano students, and "learning styles" are a phone call away. In addition, school personnel, teacher educators, and parents of color are rightfully suspicious that moving toward integrating consideration of cultural differences into courses or workshops that also address issues of subject matter and learning could mean the issues are ignored. Separating them at least ensures they are raised.

Multicultural Week is, in sum, an example of teacher educators earnestly trying to answer one of two of the most difficult questions in the field: What should teachers do about differences? How can teacher educators help them learn to do it? Alternate routes like LAUSD have degrees of freedom unimaginable in most university settings. Program personnel do not bear the albatrosses of required credit hours and curriculum committees that weigh down university teacher educators. They do not have to negotiate entry to schools and classrooms. They can take a long view of teacher development and think about how best to support teachers' growth and understanding in a relatively open-ended way. Finally, they have a wealth of human resources, including, in the case of LAUSD, numerous people of color whose experience, knowledge, and perspective is critical to teacher development programs.

We have noted that alternative approaches to preparing teachers for diverse learners would be, at best, difficult to enact. If it can be done, however, LAUSD may be able to do it. Their relative freedom, human resources, and ready access to multicultural classrooms place them in a position to develop approaches to preparing beginning teachers for multicultural classrooms that could become models for the rest of us.

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